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I. General information about Suriname

A. Geographical, economic, demographic, social and cultural indicators

1. Geographical indicators

1. The western coast of the Guianas, of which Suriname is part, was discovered in the late fifteenth century. The original inhabitants were Amerindians, who are now called Indigenous People. After different failed colonization attempts by the English and the French, Suriname was captured by the Dutch in 1667. The colony's plantation economy was based on cheap labour, using slaves from Africa. After slavery was abolished in 1863, indentured labourers were recruited from India, Indonesia and China. The descendants of these immigrants now form the larger part of the population of Suriname.

2. Suriname lies on the north-eastern part of the continent of South America, between 2 and 6 degrees north latitude and 54 and 58 degrees west longitude. It borders on the Atlantic Ocean to the north, Guyana to the west, French Guiana to the east and Brazil to the south. Suriname is divided into 10 administrative districts. Its capital city is Paramaribo.

3. The country, which is largely covered by tropical rainforest, has a surface area of about 163,820 square kilometres. About 90 per cent of the population lives in the coastal area, while 72 per cent of the population lives in a 30 km radius around the capital of Paramaribo. About 10 per cent of the population lives in the north-western area in and around Nieuw-Nickerie, the main town of the district of Nickerie, while 8 per cent is found spread out in the coastal areas to the east and west of the agglomeration of Paramaribo. About 10 per cent of the population lives in the area south of the coastal area, most of them Indigenous People and Maroons,[1] who live in tribes along the upper courses of the larger rivers.

4. The population of Suriname consists of various ethnic groups that continue to speak their own language, enjoy the culture of their native countries and are permitted to do so freely. Suriname is the world in miniature, the people of which identify as the following: 148,443 Hindustani (27.4%); 84,933 Creole (15.7%); 73,975 Javanese (13.7%); 117,567 Maroon (21.7%); 7,885 Chinese (1.5%); 20,344 Indigenous People (3.8%); 3,923 Afro-Surinamese (0.7%); 72,340 mixed race (13.4%); 1,667 Caucasians (0.3%); a remaining 7,166 (1.3%); 1,805 people who identified as being of no race (0.3%) and 1,590 who did not answer (0.3%).[2]

5. Dutch is the official language and Sranan Tongo is the lingua franca. A large number of persons in Suriname are bilingual or multilingual. At least 15 different languages are spoken, including six indigenous languages (Akurio, Carib, Trio, Wayana, Warao and Arowak), three Creole languages (Auka, Samaaka and Sranan Tongo) and four Asian languages (Sarnami Hindi, Surinamese Javanese, Hakka and Chinese). In addition to those languages mentioned above, Arabic is spoken by the Lebanese and Muslim population and Urdu is spoken by older Indian people.

[1] Maroons are the descendants of African Slaves who moved into the hinterland during slavery.
[2] General Bureau of Statistics Census 2012.

2. Economic indicators

(a) General remarks

6. The Surinamese economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience in recent years, with a stable and growth-oriented policy mix underpinning a steady pace of economic activity.

7. Mining, agriculture and manufacturing are still the most important sectors in the Surinamese economy. Since 2005, the mining sector has experienced significant growth owing to of increased prices on the world market. Suriname is the world's eighth largest bauxite producer. Gold, bauxite/aluminium and oil extraction continue to account for some 80% of total foreign exchange earnings, while agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounted for 5.5% of the gross domestic product (GPD) in 2008.[3] The main crops are rice, fruit (including bananas) and vegetables. Rice accounts for approximately half of total cultivated land. The exportation of shrimp and scale fish also contributes to Suriname's foreign exchange earnings. There is a small fish-farming sector producing fish, shrimp and crabmeat, mainly for domestic consumption. The manufacturing sector includes aluminium production, import-substituting industries using local and imported inputs and the processing of local agricultural products. Food processing accounts for about 60% of manufacturing activities. Tourism is a prime potential growth sector. The interior and coastal wetlands augur well for a vibrant eco-tourism industry.

8. The informal sector in Suriname is relatively large. Based on estimates produced by the General Bureau of Statistics Suriname, the contribution of the informal to real GDP (at market price) was of the order of 17.5% in 2008. The growth in real GDP has been variable over the past three to five years, but on average annual real GDP growth was circa 4.6% over the period 2004-2008. Total real GDP (market prices, informal and formal economy) moved from 5,247,000 Surinamese dollars (SRD) to SRD 6,291,000. The real GPD in 2012 is estimated at 4.9% and that of 2013 was 5.4%.[4]

9. The Central Bank of Suriname (CBoS) is Suriname's monetary authority and the country's governing body in monetary and economic affairs. The Bank Act also charges the CBoS with the prime objective of promoting the value and stability of the currency of Suriname. The Bank Act, moreover, establishes the CBoS as the supervisor of the banking and credit system, a task that was expanded by the amendment of article 9 in 2005, to explicitly include the pension funds, insurance companies, foreign exchange houses and money transfer companies.[5] As of 2012, Suriname's financial sector comprised the Central Bank of Suriname (CBoS), nine commercial banks (including subsidiaries), investment and finance companies, savings and credit unions, the National Development Bank, insurance companies, pension funds, provident funds, the stock exchange, foreign exchange bureaus and money transfer houses[6].

(b) Economic power

10. Suriname gross national income market price increased from 11,705,743 (x 1000 SRD) in 2010 to 15,896,900 (x 1000 SRD) in 2012. The national income per capita increased from SRD 22,038 in 2010 to 29,444 in 2012, with a midyear population that increased from 531,170 in 2010 to 539,912 in 2012. The value of exported goods was US$

[3] Millennium Development Goals Progress report 2009, Government of the Republic of Suriname.
[4] General Bureau of Statistics, Census 2012.
[5] www.cbvs.sr.
[6] www.cbvs.sr.

2,084,060,640 and that of imports was US$ 1,397,939,102. The GDP (basic prices) went from 11,136,725 in 2010 to 15,113,897 in 2012.[7]

Suriname expenditures administration

11. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the management of public revenue and the spending of public expenditure. This is to ensure that the financial resources of Suriname are spend in a responsible and efficient manner by the State apparatus and the Government, which consist of the President, the Vice President and 17 ministers in order to formulate policy. The Ministry is responsible for the overall financial, monetary and fiscal policies, as well as the investment policy, which is mapped in cooperation with other relevant ministries and other relevant government stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the design and control of the financial administration of the Republic. Therefore, compliance with the financial rules and regulations are essential to implement a predictable, transparent and consistent economic policy.

Consumer price index and inflation

12. The consumer price index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in the price of a fixed (in terms of quality and quantity) market basket of goods and services. The CPI is often referred to as cost-of-living index (COL).[8] Inflation rose from 10.3 to 15.3 in 2010 and 2011 but in 2012 decreased to 4.3.

Period	*Total price index*	
2006	85.4	X
2007	92.5	X
2008	101.2	9.4
2009	102.5	1.3
2010	113.1	10.3
2011	130.4	15.3
2012	136.1	4.3
2013*	136.9	0.6

(c) Employment

13. Creating employment opportunities in Suriname is still a major challenge, especially for the youth. The Government is the largest employer, accounting for some 40% of formal employment. In the period 1996-2005, there was a slight increase in the economic active population. In the districts of Paramaribo and Wanica, the largest districts of Suriname in terms of population living, the economic active population increased at an average annual rate of 4%. The 2004 census showed that 56% (173,130) of the total labour force was part of the economic active population. The 2012 census showed a growth in 2009, 2010 and 2011 of, respectively, 64.9%, 65.2% and 65.5%. The 2012 census showed the following regarding the labour force and economic active population[9]: 16,425 unemployed and 156,705 employed persons. The disparity between the two sexes is: men 65% (101,919)

[7] General Bureau of Statistics.
[8] General Bureau of Statistics and Central Bank of Suriname.
[9] Ibid.

and women 34.9% (54,768). Young people between 15-24 years comprised 14.5% of the employed population, while 85.5% consisted of persons between the ages of 25–65.[10]

Employed population by age group and sex[11]

Age group	*Men*	*%*	*Women*	*%*	***Total***	*%*
15-19	4,656	4.6	1,578	2.9	**6,234**	**4**
20-24	11,758	11.6	4,725	8.6	**16,514**	**10.5**
25-29	13,632	13.4	7,040	12.9	**20,685**	**13.2**
30-34	16,282	16	8,965	16.4	**25,247**	**16.1**
35-39	16	15.8	9,027	16.5	**25,178**	**16.1**
40-44	14,853	14.6	8,485	15.5	**23,338**	**14.9**
45-49	10,529	10.3	6,528	11.9	**17,057**	**10.9**
50-54	7,872	7.7	4,853	8.9	**2,726**	**8.1**
55-59	4,765	4.7	3,026	5.5	**7,791**	**5**
60-64	1,394	1.4	541	1	**1,935**	**1.2**
Total	**101,919**	**100**	**54,768**	**100**	**156,705**	**100**

3. Demographic features

Population characterization

14. An estimation of the population in 2010 was 531.170 persons, of which the capital Paramaribo has the highest population, namely, 265.953; Wanica: 95.125 and Nickerie: 40.219. The sex ratio in 2010 in the reproductive age range of the total population always gives a small surplus of men. Ages 0-14: 28.5%; 15-59: 62%; 60 years of age: 9.5%. The percentage of persons over 80 years old has increased compared with persons over 60 years of age. In 2004, that figure stood at 10.71%, while in 2010 it was 11.42%. According to the 2012 census, the population of Suriname is 541.638. Life expectancy is on average 67.7 years for males and 71.9 years for females.[12]

Sex ratio	*2012*	*2004*	*2003*	*1980*
Male	270.629	247.846	241.837	175.818
Female	271.009	244.618	239.292	179.422
Total	**541.638**	**492.829**	**481.129**	**355.240**

15. Environmental characteristics and settlement patterns have split the society into urban coastal, rural coastal and rural interior, with uneven provisioning for the latter group, mainly because of their remoteness.

4. Historical background

16. The western coast of the Guianas, of which Suriname is part, was discovered in the late fifteenth century. The original inhabitants were Amerindians, who are now called

[10] General Bureau of Statistics and Central Bank of Suriname.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.

Indigenous People. After different failed colonization attempts by the English and the French, Suriname was captured by the Dutch in 1667. The colony's plantation economy was based on cheap labour, using slaves from Africa. After slavery was abolished in 1863, indentured labourers were recruited from India, Indonesia and China. The descendants of these immigrants now form the larger part of the population of Suriname. Suriname became an independent democracy on 25 November 1975 and, as a sovereign State, acceded to several human rights instruments.

5. Social and cultural features

(a) Literacy rate and education

17. The percentage of women aged 15-24 that are literate is 92%, with considerable geographic disparities. Literacy in urban areas is 96% and 80% in rural areas.[13] Overall, 76% of children attending the first grade of primary school have attended kindergarten the previous year.

18. Primary and secondary school participation: 87% of children who enter the primary school are six years of age. Although compulsory education is legally established at 7 to 12 years, the enrolment at the age of 4 to 12 is relatively high. The majority of children of primary school age who are attending school is 95%. The gender parity for primary school is close to 1.00, indicating that there is no difference between girls and boys attending primary school. Only 79% of the children that successfully completed the last grade of primary school went on to attend the first grade of secondary school. For the secondary and higher education streams, male participation is significantly lower than female participation. The gender parity index is 1.24.[14]

(b) Poverty

19. The probability at birth of not surviving to the age of 40 has decreased from 9.07% to 7.56% in the period 2000-2008. Furthermore, it can be noted that the percentage of adults who are illiterate has declined from 13.8% to 8.1%. The percentage of people who are deprived of a decent standard of living has been reduced from 20.35% to 9.1%. This overall improvement is reflected in the downward movement of the human poverty index (HPI) in the period of evaluation, from 15.8% to 8.3%.[15]

(c) Health

Health status of the population

20. The decline in the total fertility rate explained in the previous section and the significant decrease in the general mortality rate has led to an increase of life expectancy for the Surinamese population. This has resulted in changes to the age structure and causes of mortality and morbidity of the population. In line with these changes, non-communicable diseases relating to cardiovascular causes have increased, as have the relative proportion of all causes of death. The high prevalence of risk factors should lead to a significant increase of chronic diseases in future years.

21. Regarding morbidity, the incidence rate for neglected tropical diseases persists together with an increase of sexually transmitted diseases. A decrease in the rates of

[13] Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010 (MICS2010).

[14] MICS.

[15] Millennium Development Goals Progress report 2009, Government of the Republic of Suriname, p. 20.

diseases preventable by immunization has been noted. It is concluded that, as defined by population mortality statistics, Suriname is in a transition stage, with a persistence of some infectious diseases corresponding to a transitional stage of development.

22. Sexual and reproductive health addresses the processes, functions and systems related to sexuality and reproduction at all stages of life. According to the 2004 census, the total population in the reproductive age (15-49 years) was 264,145 (134,147 men and 129,866 women). Provision of family planning services is mainly with the Lobi Foundation, an international planned parenthood federation affiliate, and the Mother & Child clinic at Lands Hospital. Family planning services at the clinics of the regional health services are limited to the provision of oral contraceptives that can also be obtained over the counter at every pharmacy. The use of oral contraceptives is the most widely practised family planning method. Currently, preparations are being made to introduce the WHO decision making tool for family planning. In 2009, the average age at which women gave birth to their first born was 22.37. The average birth rate in 2009 was 2.34.

Mortality characteristics

23. In 2009, the infant mortality rate per 1,000 girls in 2009 had increased compared with 2007 and 2008. In 2009, life expectancy for men was 68.74 years and 73.70 years for women. In the same year, the average mortality was 61.67 years for men and 68.86 years for women. At 80 years of age, life expectancy increased for both men and women.

Child mortality indicators, 1990-2012[16]

24. The under-five mortality rate measures the probability that a child will die before reaching the age of five. This was around 23 per 1000 live births until 2010. Since 2011, there has been a decline from 24 in 2010 to 16.8 in 2012.

25. The infant mortality rate (IMR) measures the chance that a child will die before even reaching the age of one. As of 2010 there has been a downward trend in IMR from 20.4 per 1000 live births to 14.6 per 1000 live births in 2012.

26. In 2011 and 2012, there has been a decrease in the under-five mortality and infant mortality.

Indicators	*1990*	*1995*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
4.1 Under-five mortality rate	31	20	27.2	21.7	22.6	23.9	24.5	24.7	24.9	23	22.3	23.3	24	17.5	16.8
4.2 Infant mortality rate	21.1	15	20.2	15.9	21.1	19.9	19.2	20.2	19.1	19.8	17.9	19.1	20.4	15.1	14.6

Maternal mortality figures[17]

Year	*Maternal mortality ratio*	*Live births*	*Maternal deaths*
1995	45.9	8717	4
1996	42.6	9393	4
1997	74.1	10794	8
1998	88.1	10221	9

[16] Epidemiology — BOG, NHIS — Ministry of VG Suriname.
[17] Epidemiology — BOG, Ministry of VG in Suriname and CBB, 2009-2010-2011-2012.

Year	*Maternal mortality ratio*	*Live births*	*Maternal deaths*
1999	108.4	10144	11
2000	153	9804	15
2001	154.4	9717	15
2002	137.4	10188	14
2003	124.6	9634	12
2004	88.3	9062	8
2005	115.5	8657	10
2006	107.4	9311	10
2007	184.3	9769	18
2008	79.2	10100	8
2009	122.5	9792	12
2010	72.1	9712	7
2011	82.4	9703	8
2012	48.9	10217	5

27. The mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) immunization coverage experienced fluctuations. MMR coverage slightly increased from 73% in 2002 to 85.7% in 2008. The overall immunization coverage of 0-12 months was approximately 85% during the period 2004-2008.[18]

28. Cardiovascular diseases have been the leading cause of death for many years. Among them, the most prevalent are cerebral-vascular diseases followed by ischemic heart diseases. There has been a notable downward trend in the mortality form cardiovascular diseases, from 29.4% in 2005 to 26.4% in 2009. This can be attributed to medical advances regarding cardiovascular surgeries in Suriname in the past five years. Mortality rates due to cardiovascular diseases are higher for men than for women. Morbidity data on myocardial infarction from the academic hospitals for the period 2007-2010 indicate that men are more affected than women (76% versus 24%).

29. In the past, Suriname has had a successful tuberculosis (TB) control programme, resulting in a very low prevalence of TB. According to the registry of the TB programme, the smear-positive TB cases in 2007 were calculated at 20 per 100,000. With the rise of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the number of TB cases increased from 82 cases (20 per 100,000) in 1990 to 156 cases (30 per 100,000) in 2009, with an overall tendency towards an overrepresentation of men in the adult age categories.

[18] Millennium Development Goals Progress report 2009, Government of the Republic of Suriname, p. 39.

Suriname annual deaths by main causes and sex, 2007-2011[10]

The important causes of death	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*
Cardiovascular	**848**	**819**	**815**	**870**	**767**
Males	482	439	434	485	418
Females	366	380	381	385	394
External causes	**364**	**398**	**422**	**374**	**374**
Males	265	310	317	262	292
Females	99	88	105	112	82
Malignant neoplasm	**310**	**376**	**351**	**376**	**390**
Males	163	198	187	185	209
Females	147	178	164	191	181
Diabetes mellitus	**189**	**171**	**174**	**222**	**251**
Males	88	91	92	119	121
Females	101	80	82	103	130
HIV/AIDS	**142**	**120**	**106**	**119**	**105**
Males	85	71	57	75	63
Females	57	49	49	44	42
Acute respiratory infections	**103**	**79**	**87**	**113**	**113**
Males	63	49	47	67	65
Females	40	30	40	46	48
Urinary tract infections	**70**	**58**	**89**	**69**	**73**
Males	43	38	57	43	44
Females	27	20	32	26	29
Liver cirrhosis and chronic liver diseases	**34**	**38**	**32**	**49**	**63**
Males	34	38	32	38	52
Females	-	0	0	11	11
Congenital anomalies	**21**	**24**	**24**	**49**	**NA.**
Males	-	0	0	21	NA.
Females	21	24	24	27	NA.
Sepsis, excluding neonatal	-	**17**	**0**	**NA.**	**38**
Males	-	17	0	NA.	12

d) Crime and justice

Judiciary power: judges

30. The judiciary is legally governed by the Law on Organization and the Composition of the Surinamese Judiciary Power, and is composed of judges and public prosecutors. According to the aforementioned Law, the jurisdiction in civil and criminal cases is exercised by Cantonal Courts and the Court of Justice, except in cases where criminal jurisdiction is dedicated to another judge (art. 2). Jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters is shared between three Cantonal Courts, which function as courts of first instance,

[10] General Bureau for Statistics, Selected Gender Statistics 2013.

and the Court of Justice, which functions as an appellate court. The Court of Justice also exercises jurisdiction in criminal cases against political office holders[20] and in disputes between State officials and the State. The Court of Justice is the administrative governing authority of the judicial system and consists of a President, a Vice-President and a maximum of 40 members.[21] The Court of Justice also employs a Procurator General, two Advocates Generals and a Registrar, who are all appointed by the President (art. 32). According to the acting President of the Court, there are currently 16 judges at the Surinamese Court of Justice. A course for judicial officers in training[22] is currently under way for future judges, who are expected to be appointed in three years.

Judiciary power: public prosecutors

31. Pursuant to article 3 of the Law on Organization and the Composition of the Surinamese Judiciary Power, the Procurator General and the Advocates Generals at the Court of Justice, the Chief Public Prosecutors, Public Prosecutors and Substitute Public Prosecutors are charged with enforcing the laws, the prosecution of all criminal offenses, which are submitted to the Court of Justice and the District Courts, and carrying out all of the judgements of these Courts. The Procurator General of the Court of Justice is obliged to fulfil the orders, which in office are given to him by or on behalf of the President (art. 4). According to the Procurator General, there are currently 21 members of the Public Prosecution Service.

Lawyers

32. Legally trained individuals who meet requirements specified by the President of the Court of Justice can be admitted to the Court of Justice as lawyers. The President oversees the authorization and supervision of the activities of the lawyers, the exercise of discipline on lawyers as well as the determination of their professional dress (art. 43 of the Law on Organization and the Composition of the Surinamese Judiciary Power). According to the Secretary of the Bar Association in Suriname, there are 145 lawyers registered with the Bar.

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

1. Form of government

33. Suriname became a colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1667. The first political parties were founded shortly after the First World War and the first general elections were held in 1949. In 1954, Suriname acquired autonomy from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and, on 25 November 1975, it gained independence in a peaceful manner. The Governments before and after independence consisted of coalitions of different political parties, organized in large part on an ethnic basis.

34. On 25 February 1980, a military coup d'état took place, which removed the legitimately elected civil Government. Suriname was governed by a military dictatorship until 25 November 1987, and then again from 24 December 1990 through 25 May 1991. In the 1980s, the lack of respect for the constitutional State, serious violations of human rights, a devastating war in the hinterland of Suriname and a dramatic economic deterioration were

[20] Law Act of August 27, 2007 amending the Act of Law impeachment procedure political office holders, article 12a (S.B. 2007 #101).

[21] The Law on Organization and the Composition of the Surinamese Judiciary Power was amended on 31 March 2009. The maximum number of members of The Court of Justice of Suriname was reduced from 15 to 40.

[22] In Dutch, this course is named "RAIO", which stands for "Rechterlijke Ambtenaren in Opleiding".

manifest. The process of democratization, which had officially started in January 1988, suffered from the second coup d'état on 24 December 1990. Since May 1991, Suriname has again been governed by a democratically elected civilian Government.

35. Since the eighteenth century, Suriname has been under the influence of Roman Law, Canon Law, Common Law and Old Dutch Law (Germanic). In 1869, through the codification, the Dutch legislation system, civil law, was introduced in Suriname. Based on the concordance principle, the law in effect in Suriname was harmonized with that of the Dutch colonizer. Currently, Suriname has a civil law system.

36. Suriname became an independent republic on 25 November 1975, and the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname became operative. Based on article II of the additional articles of the 1975 Constitution, all pre-independence legislative products obtained the status of Suriname Laws. On 25 February 1980, the democratic Government was overthrown by a military coup d'état, followed by the deactivation of the 1975 Constitution by the subsequent military regime. In 1987, after a public referendum, a new Constitution was adopted, consisting mostly of pre-independence provisions. With a few amendments, the 1992 Constitution is still in force.

37. The present Constitution of the Republic of Suriname, with its 186 articles, was proclaimed in 1987. This Constitution, which was drawn up during the military regime, was approved by referendum on 30 September 1987. The Constitution was amended in 1992. According to the Constitution, the Republic of Suriname is a democratic State, based on the sovereignty of the people and on respect for and the guaranteeing of fundamental rights and freedoms. The system of Government is a presidential system with parliamentary supervision.

2. Democracy, political parties and the electoral system

38. The legislative power is exercised jointly by the National Assembly and the Government. The socioeconomic and political policy which the Government wants to conduct is submitted to the National Assembly for its approval.

39. Furthermore, the National Assembly supervises the work of the Government in accordance with the Constitution. The National Assembly has 51 members, who are chosen on the basis of free and secret elections for a term of five years, in accordance with the system of proportional representation. During the first meeting of the National Assembly, which must take place within 30 days of the elections, the meeting elects its speaker and deputy speaker. The National Assembly shall establish its own standing orders, which must be published by State decree.

40. Suriname is a constitutional democracy, with a President elected by the unicameral National Assembly or by the larger United People's Assembly, comprising National Assembly members (51) and the elected members of the regional representative bodies, namely, the District Council (106) and the Local Council (737). The United People's Assembly consists of 894 members. The President is the Head of State of the Republic of Suriname, Head of Government and Chairman of the Council of State and the Security Council. The President is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, is responsible for foreign policy and promotes the development of the international legal order. The President is chosen for a period of five years by the National Assembly and is answerable to the National Assembly. At his inauguration, the President takes the prescribed oath before the National Assembly.

41. Elections are held every five years and, since 1996, when the first female Speaker of Parliament was elected, there has been a steady improvement as regards the number of women in parliamentary positions. However, in 2010, that number decreased.

Members of parliament according to term and gender[23]

Period	*Designation of legislative body*	*M*	*F*	***Total***	*%*
1987-1991	National Assembly	47	4	**51**	8
1991-1996	National Assembly	48	3	**51**	6
1996-2000	National Assembly	43	8	**51**	16
2000-2005	National Assembly	41	10	**51**	20
2005-2010	National Assembly	38	13	**51**	25
2010-2015	National Assembly	44	7	**51**	

Members of cabinet according to term and sex[24]

Period	*Designation of legislative body*	*M*	*F*	***Total***	*%*
1987-1991	Council of Ministers	16	1	**17**	6
1991-1996	Council of Ministers	18	–	**18**	0
1996-2000	Council of Ministers	18	2	**20**	10
2000-2005	Council of Ministers	17	3	**20**	15
2005-2010	Council of Ministers	14	3	**17**	18
2010-2015	Council of Ministers	16	1	**17**	

Distribution of seats in the National Assembly by party

Party	*Election period*	*No. of seats*
Mega Combinatie	2010	23
A Combinatie	2010	5
Volks Alliantie	2010	6
Partij voor Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid	2010	–
Nieuw Front	2010	14
Broederschap en Eenheid in de Politek	2010	2

Numbers of recognized national political parties or combinations

Year	*No. of parties*
2010	9

3. Legal structure

42. Surinamese law is divided in public law and private law and is a codified system. The legal framework has its foundation mostly in the Constitution and consists, among others, of public law, civil procedure, civil law, criminal law and criminal procedure. The hierarchy of statutory regulations in Suriname is in the sequence listed as follows: international conventions; the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname; State Acts; Presidential Resolutions; State Decrees derived from State Acts; and ministerial decrees derived from State Acts.

[23] Millennium Development Goals Progress report 2009, Government of the Republic of Suriname.
[24] Ibid.

43. The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname is the supreme national law of the country. It sets out and defines the authority of main bodies of the State. All other legal regulations and laws must be in line with the Constitution, otherwise they will be null and void.

44. The preamble of the Constitution embodies the guarantee that the principles of freedom, equality and democracy as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of mankind, will be respected. Chapters V and VI of the Constitution set out the different basic rights and freedoms, as well as the manner in which they can be protected. Article 10 of the Constitution states that "everyone has, in case of infringement of his rights and freedoms, a claim to a fair and public treatment of his complaint within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial judge".

45. Chapter XI of the Constitution articulates that the legislative power is jointly exercised by the National Assembly and the Government. Chapter XIII, section 2, and Chapter XXI, respectively, articulate that the executive power is vested in the President and the local governments.

46. Chapter XV discusses the judicial power, such as the President and Vice-President of the High Court of Justice, the judges, the Procurator-General and the Public Prosecutors.

47. In sum, it can be stated that human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution.

48. Suriname's law acknowledges two authorities that can administer justice: the Cantonal Court, which is the lower court, and the High Court of Justice, which is the Appellate Court (art. 39 of the Constitution). Suriname also recognizes the original jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice for the interpretation of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the contentious jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

49. The human rights infrastructure applicable to the Republic of Suriname has both a legal and an institutional component. The legal component includes the constitutional regulations, other national laws of Suriname and international and regional treaty laws. The institutional infrastructure is composed of governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations and international and regional human rights mechanisms, all targeting different aspects of human rights.

4. Membership of regional organizations

UN, OAS, CELAC, UNASUR, MERCOSUR, CARICOM

50. The present common core document is drafted in the context of Suriname's membership of the United Nations. Suriname became member of the United Nations in 1976 and has ratified most human rights conventions.

51. The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, having come into being in 1948 with the signing in Bogotá of the charter of the OAS, which entered into force in December 1951. It was subsequently amended by the Protocol of Buenos Aires, signed in 1967, which entered into force in February 1970; the Protocol of Cartagena de Indias, signed in 1985, which entered into force in November 1988; the Protocol of Managua, signed in 1993, which entered into force in January 1996; and the Protocol of Washington, signed in 1992, which entered into force in September 1997. Suriname became member of OAS in 1976 and has also ratified the core treaties of this organization.

52. On February 23, 2010, Latin American leaders at the twenty-third Rio Group summit in Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico, said they were forming an

organization of the Latin American and Caribbean States. Once its charter had been developed, the group was formally established in July 2011, at a summit in Caracas. The block will be the main forum for political dialogue for the area.

53. The First Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in 2013 is being developed in conjunction with the Nineteenth Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officials in Charge of Cultural Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Suriname is also a member of CELAC.

54. Suriname has joined MERCOSUR Latin American trade block as an associate member.

55. GRULAC is a non-binding consensus and dialogue group comprising all Latin American and Caribbean countries, the purpose of which is to reach consensus on the different topics of the region. Suriname is also a member of GRULAC.

56. The Union of South American Nations is an intergovernmental body modelled after the European Union. Known as UNASUR, the group acts as a forum for interaction between leaders of its member States and serves as a platform for interregional trade promotion. Suriname chaired this organization in 2013 and 2014.

57. In 1995, Suriname became a full member of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy of CARICOM. The CARICOM Single Market and Economy, also known as the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, is an integrated development strategy envisioned at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, which took place in July 1989 in Grand Anse, Grenada.

5. Recognition of non-governmental organizations

58. Any person or group of persons, such as a corporation or organization or foundation, who wants to be legally recognized has to be recognized as such in a resolution of the President of the Republic of Suriname, or established as such by statute by a notary and registered by the Chamber of Commerce.

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

1. Main international human rights conventions and protocols

59. Ratification status:

Convention, Signature (S), Accession (A), Ratification (R), Succession (D)

1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966, **A** 28/12/1976;
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966, **A** 28/12/1976;
3. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1965, **D** 15/03/1984;
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, **A** 01/03/1993;
5. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, **R** 01/03/1993;

6. Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000. **S** 10/05/2002;

7. Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, 2000. **R** 18/05/2012;

8. Optional Protocol to ICCPR, concerning individual petition, 1966. **A** 28/12/1976.

2. Other United Nations human rights and related conventions

60. Ratification status:

1. Slavery Convention, 1926 as amended in 1955. **A** 12/10/1979;

2. Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices similar to Slavery, 1956. **D** 12/10/1979;

3. Supplementary Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, 1973. **A** 03/06/1980;

4. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998. **A** 15/07/2008;

5. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, and its Protocols against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. **A** 25/05/2007;

6. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, and its 1967 Protocol. **D** 29/11/1978.

3. Conventions of the International Labour Organization

61. Ratification status:

1. ILO Convention No. 29 concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, 1930. **A** 15/06/1976;

2. ILO Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948. **A** 15/06/1976;

3. ILO Convention No. 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, 1957. **A** 15/06/1976;

4. ILO Convention No. 135 concerning Protection and Facilities to be Afforded to Workers' Representatives in the Undertaking. **A** 15/06/1976;

5. ILO Convention No. 155 concerning Occupational Safety and Health Right of Association (Agriculture) Convention, 1921 (No. 11). **A** 15/06/1976;

6. White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13). **A** 15/06/1976;

7. Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14). **A** 15/06/1976;

8. Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention, 1925 (No. 17). **A** 15/06/1976;

9. Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19). **A** 15/06/1976;

10. Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention (Revised), 1934 (No. 42). **A** 15/06/1976;

11. Marking of Weight (Packages Transported by Vessels) Convention, 1929 (No. 27). **A** 15/06/1976;

12. Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 (No. 62). **A** 15/06/1976;

13. Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88). **A** 15/06/1976;

14. Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94). **A** 15/06/1976;

15. Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95). **A** 15/06/1976;

16. Holidays with Pay (Agriculture) Convention, 1952 (No. 101). **A** 15/06/1976;

17. Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106). **A** 15/06/1976;

18. Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 112). A 15/06/1976;

19. Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118). *Has accepted Branch (g)* **A** 15/06/1976;

20. Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135). **A** 15/06/1976;

21. Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150). **A** 15/06/1976;

22. Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151). **A** 29/09/1981;

23. Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181). **A** 05/06/1996;

24. Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154). **A** 12/04/2006;

4. Geneva Conventions and other treaties on international humanitarian law

62. Ratification status:

1. The four Geneva Conventions, 1949 **D** 13/10/1976;

2. Additional Protocol (I) to the four Geneva Conventions, 1977. **A** 16/12/1985;

3. Additional Protocol (II) to the four Geneva Conventions, 1977. **A** 16/12/1985;

4. Additional Protocol (III) to the four Geneva Conventions, 2005. **A** 25/06/2013;

5. Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons, 1972. **A** 09/04/1993;

6. Convention Prohibition Chemical Weapons, 1993. **A** 28/04/1997;

7. Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, 1997. **A** 23/05/2002;

8. Convention on Mercenaries, 1989. **A** 10/08/1990;

5. Regional human rights conventions

63. Ratification status:

1. American Convention on Human Rights, 1969. **A** 11/12/1987;

2. Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish of Torture, 1985. **A** 11/12 1987;

3. The Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1988. **A** 28/02/1990;

4. Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, punishment and Eradication of violence against women, 1994. A 19/02/2002.

B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

1. Legislation

Introduction

64. Human rights are protected under the Constitution and other legislation in certain areas. The Republic of Suriname is a democratic State based upon the sovereignty of the people and on the respect and guarantee of the fundamental right and liberties.

65. Article 103 of the Constitution states that agreements with other powers and with organizations based on international law shall be concluded by, or by authority of, the President and shall be, insofar as the agreements require, ratified by the President. These agreements shall be communicated to the National Assembly as soon as possible; they shall not be ratified and they shall not enter into force until they have received the approval of the National Assembly.

66. On the other hand, article 105 states that the provisions of the agreements mentioned in article 103, which may be directly applicable to anyone, shall have this binding effect as from the time of publication. Article 106 states that legal regulations in force in the Republic of Suriname shall not apply, if this application should be incompatible with provisions that are directly applicable to anyone, to agreements entered into either before or after the enactment of the regulations.

67. Chapter IV of the Constitution describes "international principles" and states in article 7, among other things, that (1) the Republic of Suriname recognizes and respects the right of nations to self-determination and national independence on the basis of equality, sovereignty and mutual benefit; (4) the Republic of Suriname promotes the solidarity and cooperation with other peoples in the combat against colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, genocide and in the combat for national liberation, peace and social progress; (5) the Republic of Suriname promotes the participation in international organizations with a view to establishing peaceful coexistence, peace and progress for mankind.

68. Chapter V of the Constitution refers to personal rights and freedoms. This chapter contains different principles which are laid down in international human rights conventions: equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of birth, sex, race, language, religion, origin, education, political conviction, economic position or social conditions or any other (arts. 10,11 and 12); rights and freedoms: physical, mental and moral integrity (art. 9); the right to life (art. 14); personal liberty and safety (art. 16); respect for privacy, family life, home, honour and good name (art. 17, para. 1); confidentiality of correspondence, telephone and telegraph (art. 17, para. 3); freedom of religion and philosophy of life (art. 18); freedom of opinion and expression thereof (art. 20); freedom of peaceful association and assembly (art. 20); freedom of demonstration (art. 21).

69. Chapter VI of the Constitution contains social, cultural and economic rights and obligations, of which the following principles concern rights and freedoms.

70. The right to work under humane, safe and healthy conditions, the right to a remuneration for work, the prohibition of forced labour or compulsory labour, freedom of trade union, rights of trade unions and entrepreneurs, and the right to strike (arts. 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 15, 30, 31, 32 and 33, and also art. 15 of chap. V).

71. The right to an undisturbed enjoyment of property and prohibition of expropriation, except in the general interest, pursuant to rules laid down by law and against an assured compensation (art. 34); the protection of family, the protection of the child, the right of working women to paid maternity leave (arts. 35 and 36); equality of men and women before the law (art. 35, para. 2); the right to health (art. 36); the right to free primary education and the obligation of the State to guarantee access to all educational levels, scientific research and cultural creations (arts. 38 and 39).

2. Remedies

72. Article 10 of the Constitution safeguards that everyone, feeling that his rights and freedoms have been infringed, has the right to an honest and public hearing of his complaint within a reasonable period and by an independent and impartial judge.

73. Article 11 of the Constitution states that no person may be withdrawn against his own will from the judge whom the law assigns to him. The authorities in Suriname always enforce the judgement given by the judicial authorities.

74. If one does not agree with the decision of the judge in the first instance, or after having gone through the hierarchy within the Administration, one may appeal to the High Court of Justice. The High Court will also function as the civil service tribunal.

75. Furthermore, it may be said that the guarantees, as included in articles 10, 11 and 16, paragraph 2, of the Constitution, are in effect.

76. Article 12 of the Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to legal assistance, while the financially weak are entitled to "free" legal aid, at least legal aid that is paid by the State.

77. Separate statutory regulations contain provisions regulating the ways for individuals who are financially incapable of paying the costs of legal assistance.

78. The Government pays the costs of a lawyer for these individuals. Furthermore, the Government has a special department at the Ministry of Justice and Police, the Legal Care Unit/Section (*Afdeling Rechtszorg*), which is to provide legal advice to persons who cannot pay the costs of legal aid. This unit/section is mainly concerned with an array of civil matters (tenancy agreements, employment matters, family law matters such as adoption, guardianship, change of name, etc.).

79. In order to lower the threshold for the financially weak, the Ministry of Justice and Police is working on some new models. The administrative procedures to qualify for free legal aid will have to be reduced considerable. This matter has the attention of the government.

3. Inter-American Court of Human Rights

80. There are four judgements against Suriname from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights: the Aloeboetoe case, the Gangaram Panday case, the Moiwana case and the Samaaka Los case. With respect to the Moiwana case, the State is in the process of developing tailor made legislation and administrative and other measures necessary to ensure the property rights in relation to traditional territories of the members of the Moiwana Community, which includes land rights. This subject is still not resolved due to its complexity. For example, an indigenous tribe of the village Alfonsdorp, nearby to the Moiwana maroon village, claims the Moiwana area as their traditional tribal territory. Concerning the land rights of tribal and indigenous communities, Suriname is making a conscientious effort to deliver the most appropriate solution in order to fully comply and implement the judgement of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the Saamaka Los case.

C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

1. Human Rights Bureau

81. Although not a national human rights institution according to the Paris principles, the Ministry of Justice and Police has installed a human rights bureau to implement human rights standards and judgement from human rights bodies at the international and regional levels.

82. This bureau is also responsible for the legal support in cases regarding human rights at regional and international forums. The Mother and Child Bureau is also covered by the Ministry of Justice and Police, while the Gender Bureau is covered by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

2. Dissemination of human rights instruments

83. Most United Nations treaties are translated into the official language of Suriname, namely, Dutch. At the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, law students are lectured in almost all the conventions to which Suriname is a party. Civil society is also one of the actors that contribute in the dissemination of human rights instruments.

3. Raising human rights awareness among public officials and other professionals and educational programmes

84. Education and training in human rights is a prerequisite for promoting and protecting human rights. The UNA is helping in promoting and raising awareness of human rights among students and teachers in high schools. At the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, human rights is compulsory for students with a major in international public law and for students of public administration. Public officials together with other professionals are regularly are trained in human rights law, for example, law enforcement personnel, military personnel, prison wardens and other personnel of the various ministries.

4. Promotion of human rights awareness through the media

85. Freedom of expression and of the press is guaranteed both through international human rights instruments and in the Surinamese Constitution. The press and other mass media regularly highlight important human rights issues in Suriname and play a vital role in facilitating public debate on these questions. Civil society also uses the media to put human rights issues on the public agenda.

5. Role of civil society, including non-governmental organizations

86. Civil society, including human rights defenders, plays a key role in the realization of human rights in Suriname and has laid much of the foundation for democracy and welfare in Suriname society. NGOs promote diversity, disseminate knowledge, stimulate debate on policies and priorities, contribute proposals to public consultations, engage in voluntary work and promote social cohesion. In many cases, matters have been placed on the agenda as a result of initiatives taken by civil society stakeholders.

6. Budget allocations and trends

87. Human rights are mainstreamed in all areas of the public administration. Funding for human rights is therefore not specifically allocated in the national budget, but appears under a wide range of items, such as education, health care and court administration.

88. National reports and communications regarding human rights at the international and regional levels are drafted under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Police, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

D. Reporting process at the national level

89. Suriname has drafted its national reports and common core document according to United Nations guidelines. Several ministries and civil society have participated in the process of drafting the national reports. In 2012 Suriname underwent the universal periodic review process.

90. Suriname has submitted several national reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Right of the Child, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

III. Organization of the Government's efforts to promote equal rights and prevent discrimination

91. The Republic of Suriname is bound by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and regional organizations. Suriname's policy is based on non-discrimination and combating racial discrimination.

92. The country's Constitution provides the framework for its policy of combating racial discrimination. Laws have been enacted to give effect to the promotion of the principle of non-discrimination and equality before the law of citizens and foreign nationals.

93. The Republic of Suriname is a sovereign and democratic State founded on human dignity and the promotion of human rights and freedoms.

94. As stated in the previous report, and reaffirmed by the Committee in its concluding observations, the definition of racial discrimination in the Convention has been adopted by the Criminal Code and the Constitution, which unequivocally states in its article 8 that "no one shall be discriminated against on grounds of birth, sex, race, language, religion, education, political opinion, economic position or any other status".

95. In its article 126, the Criminal Code states that racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, restriction or preference which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.

96. Other articles in chapters V and VI of the Constitution, discussing fundamental rights, make no distinction between individuals, indicating that all individuals have the same rights.

97. Pursuant to article 1, section 2, of the Convention, the State has adopted several acts indicating distinctions or restrictions between citizens and non-citizens. The Election Act, for example, only gives Surinamese citizens the right to vote and to be elected in high governmental and administrative positions.

98. Citizens can be elected as members of the National Assembly, members of the judiciary or members of the executive branch. These acts are in compliance with the Convention and are not considered racial discrimination.

99. The Surinamese Nationality and Citizenship Act gives provisions regarding nationality, citizenship and naturalization of individuals. This act does not discriminate against any particular nationality but gives objective norms/standards that must be complied with before an individual can receive Surinamese nationality. Based on the Constitution, this must be done by an act of the National Assembly.

100. Article 126 *bis* of the Surinamese Penal Code defines what is meant by discrimination, namely, all forms of distinction, any exclusion, restriction or preference, which aims at or as a result of which may cause the nullification or impairment, recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social or cultural spheres or in other areas of public life.

101. Articles 175 of the Criminal Code indicates that a person who publicly, orally, in writing or in pictures wilfully insults and denigrates a group of human beings because of their race, their religion or their way of life, shall be punished with maximum imprisonment of one year or a maximum fine of SRD 1,000.

102. Article 175 (a) of the Criminal Code indicates that a person who publicly, orally or in writing or in pictures, incites to hatred of or discrimination against persons or violent behaviour towards persons or property of persons because of their race, religion or way of life shall be punished with maximum imprisonment of two years or a maximum fine of SRD 2,000.

103. Suriname has a multiracial population with a plurality of religions. Peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups is therefore of great importance for tranquillity in the country. The Criminal Code therefore includes provisions making any behaviour that could lead to racial and religious hatred a punishable offence. This is codified in the above-mentioned articles 175 and 175 (a).

104. There are no cases where persons have propagated violent behaviour towards others simply because of race, ethnicity or religion. The ban on hate speech is strictly enforced by the authorities because racial disturbances happening in the region show the necessity of this provision.